



United States Mission to the OSCE

PRESS RELEASE

October 6, 2014

US, EU decry backsliding on human rights, crackdown on activists in Russia, Azerbaijan

Russia once again found itself isolated at Europe's largest human rights conference, when diplomats and activists gathered in Warsaw for the OSCE's annual human rights meeting.

At the closing session on October 3, the U.S. delegation called upon OSCE participating States to fulfill their commitments related to security, prosperity, and human rights in the closing session of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting held in Warsaw against the backdrop of threats to the fundamental precepts and core values upon which European security and the OSCE itself were founded.

U.S. Head of Delegation Brian Atwood criticized governments that have become adept at rationalizing their suppression of human rights, "When one member of the OSCE backslides on their commitments, it pulls all of us backwards as an OSCE community."

For the past two weeks the U.S. delegation has welcomed good faith efforts and concrete progress by many participating States in implementing their commitments. The exchange of best practices among NGOs, ODIHR, and government representatives works to further dialogue on addressing challenges to the human dimension.

Regrettably, steps have also been taken in some participating States that widen the gulf between their commitments and their practices. Russia has shown continuing disregard for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one of its neighbors, Ukraine. The space for civil society and freedom of expression in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan is increasingly closing. Laws and policies aimed at restricting religious freedoms are being applied in a discriminatory way. The United States will be watching closely to see that the brave human rights activists who have participated in HDIM do not face retribution when they return home.

Mr. Atwood emphasized, "Comprehensive security is the backbone of the OSCE. The human dimension becomes all the more important given the current tensions surrounding violations of sovereignty and territorial integrity. We should all strive to resurrect the integrity of the Helsinki Final Act."



For further information please contact:

U.S. Mission to the OSCE

Kathy Eagen, Public Affairs Counselor

Tel. (+43-1) 31339-3422 / Cell: (+43) 664 811 7639

E-mail: EagenKM@state.gov / <http://osce.usmission.gov>